



The Spectacle

From the Office Down the Hall

Some questions seem to have no answer. When Colleen Curry transferred from the Arlington House Curator to become the Curator for Yellowstone (I cannot imagine why, who's ever heard of that place; sure she no longer has to deal with traffic jams, but the Bison can really wreck havoc on her commute now!) I did not know how we could possibly replace her. But then again, some questions *do* have an answer. And this was a good one!

I would like to extend a warm welcome to our new, Arlington House Curator, Mary Troy. Some of you undoubtedly already know her from her work as Curator at Clara Barton and Glen Echo National Historical Sites, but Mary brings a much more extensive and interesting set of skills and experience to bear than just her most recent assignment.

Prior to Clara Barton's Mary was an archaeologist with the Northeast Cultural Resources Center in Lowell, MA; a National Park Service support office. Mary also detailed as museum curator at Assateague Island National Seashore in Berlin, MD from 1998 to 2000. Her other National Park Service assignments included working on archaeological, curatorial, natural resource, and archival projects in the Northeast Region as well as in a variety of other National Park areas including Acadia, Adams, Women's Rights, Gettysburg, Saugus Iron Works, Cape Cod National Seashore, Statue of Liberty, Home of Franklin Roosevelt, The Vanderbilt Mansion, Assateague Island, Canyonlands, Saint Croix Island, Washington's Birthplace, Sitka and Jean Lafitte—barnacles to



Arlington House in winter - February 19, 2003

presidents to women to war to iron to sand to pirates and Russians. Given that experience, I felt she could handle issues surrounding Robert E. Lee with aplomb, and just might be able to tackle the likes of our dear, George Washington Parke Custis.

Initially, Mary will be splitting some of her time covering the huge hole she will be leaving behind at Clara Barton. Otherwise, look for her when you volunteer next and introduce yourself; Mary is a wonderful addition to our Arlington House family! If you have never seen the collections, ask her for a tour.

Kendell Thompson
Site Manager
Arlington House
The Robert E. Lee Memorial

VIP training to be held

Volunteer training will be held on Sunday, February 29, and Sunday, March 21, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Attendance at one of the two sessions is essential for new volunteers. Experienced volunteers may also attend. Training will cover site guidelines and procedures as well as themes and methods of interpretation. A complete guided tour of the house and grounds will also be included. **Please bring a bag lunch.** Contact Delphine Gross at (703) 235-1530 ext. 227 to confirm which day you can attend.

Significant Historic Events in February

February 3, 1774

John “Jack” Parke Custis and Eleanor “Nelly” Calvert were married at Mount Airy, the bride’s home near Upper Marlborough, Maryland.

February 1, 1778

George Washington recommended that his ward, Jack Custis, buy land at once to offset the wartime depreciation of currency. Jack then set out to buy the Alexander track, which eventually became Arlington estate. The transaction was not fully accomplished until December 1778.

February 21, 1825

The “National Intelligencer” summarized a speech made by GWP Custis at the annual meeting of the American Colonization Society in which Custis “mourned the existence of slavery to the South” and “rejoiced that there was, at length, a ground of hope that it will one day be removed.”

February 5, 1826

George Hadfield, the architect of Arlington House, died in Washington City at the age of 62. His obituary in the “National Intelligencer” included “Mr. Custis’ House” in a list of buildings Mr. Hadfield designed in the Washington area.

February 22, 1732

George Washington was born at Pope’s Creek, Northern Neck, Westmoreland County, Virginia.

February 22, 1830

In “The Birthnight,” published by GWP Custis in his “Recollections of Washington,” Custis told how the custom of celebrating Washington’s birthday with balls had originated, emphasizing that Washington had always approved of and enjoyed such “rational and elegant pleasures of life” and was “partial to the amusements of the theatre.”

February 22, 1832

GWP Custis participated in many local celebrations of the Centennial of

Washington’s birth. He painted a heroic portrait of the General watching the cannonade at the Battle of Trenton which was used to decorate the Union Hotel in Georgetown. He marched in an Alexandria parade and spoke to the Washington Society at Christ Church.

February 27, 1841

Eleanor Agnes Lee, the fifth child of Robert and Mary Lee, was born at Arlington House.

February 10, 1846

Mildred Childe Lee, the seventh child and fourth daughter of Robert and Mary Lee, was born at Arlington House. She was named for Lee’s youngest sister, Catharine Mildred Lee, who had married Edward Vernon Childe, and lived with him in Paris.

February 16, 1858

In a gesture which deeply touched his father, Custis Lee had a deed drawn which would have transferred his own interest in Arlington to Robert E. Lee. “I trust Pa will not refuse to receive my interest in Arlington, for my sake, if not for his own,” Custis wrote to his Mother. “I can never have any interest separate from my dear Father and Mother.” Lee refused the offer because he felt “it would not be right” for him to accept such a gift.

February 10, 1860

Lee left Arlington at 6 a.m. to take command at San Antonio, Texas, which would be his last assignment in military service to the United States. On March 10, he wrote to his wife, “It was very sad to leave you & my departure grows harder to bear with years.”

February 1, 1861

Texas, where Lieutenant Colonel Lee was stationed at the time, seceded from the Union.

February 13, 1861

The Virginia secession convention convened in Richmond. There were 152 delegates chosen by public vote. The majority of delegates desired to preserve the Union

provided the North make concessions, and as long as the general government did not use force against a Commonwealth attempting to secede. The convention proceeded to study the situation and consider possibilities for compromise. The first vote on adopting an ordinance of secession was not taken until April 4, when it was defeated 88-45.

February 22, 1861

President Buchanan called off the customary Washington Day parade “for fear some untoward incident might occur.”

The Lee family celebrated the day privately at Arlington with some of their friends, including two of Rooney’s from Massachusetts, Henry and Charles Francis Adams. Adams would later recall that “there must have been fully half-a-dozen future generals and colonels about the Arlington table that day.”

President-elect Lincoln quietly left Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and slipped into Washington early the next morning so as to avoid possible difficulty in pro-Southern Baltimore.

February 8, 1862

General Lee received orders to assume the duties of General-in-Chief of the Armies of the Confederate States.

February 14, 1864

Mrs. Lee suggested that General Lee add their son, Robert, Jr., to his staff. Lee replied that “his company would be a great pleasure & comfort to me & he would be extremely useful to me in various ways. I have written to him to that effect. But I am opposed to officers surrounding themselves with their sons and relatives. It is wrong in principle & in that case the selection of offices would be made from private & social relations, rather than for the public good...I should prefer Rob’s being in the line, in an independent position, where he could rise by his own merit & not through the recommendation of his relatives.”

(continued on page 3)

Area Special Events

February 7

Living history, "Confederate Surgeon," at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick, Maryland. 11 am-3 pm. Free with admission.

301-695-1864 or www.civilwarmed.org

February 14

Walking tour, "Path to Freedom - Frederick Douglas Walking Tour," begins at noon at the Baltimore Civil War Museum at the President Street Station, Baltimore, Maryland. Free with museum admission. www.mdhs.org or 410-461-9377.

February 14-15

Living history, "Freedom Won," talk with African-American soldiers who fought during the Civil War at Endview Plantation in Newport News, Virginia. Free with admission. www.endview.org or 757-887-1862.

Living history at the Ellicott City B&O Railroad Station Museum in Ellicott City, Maryland. Demonstrations highlight the

opening of a Civil War exhibit. Free with \$5 admission. 410-461-1945 or www.ecbo.org.

February 19

Lecture, "USS Monitor: An Undertaking Below the Waterline," challenges of the recovery and conservation of the ironclad's wreck. Talk at the USS Constellation in The Inner Harbor, Baltimore, Maryland. 7 pm. \$12 at door, \$10 advance. 410-539-1797 or www.constellation.org.

February 20-22

Living history encampment and commemoration of the "Last Confederate Capital" at Danville at the Danville Museum of Fine Arts and History (Sutherlin Mansion). 10 am-4 pm each day. Sunday lecture (2 pm) on Civil War medicine. Free. Details: www.danvillemuseum.org or call 434-793-5644.

February 21

Living history, "Introduction to the Signal Corps," at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick, Maryland. 11 am-3 pm. Free with admission. 301-695-1864 or www.civilwarmed.org.

Living history, "African-American Men & Women of Valor" highlights African-American contributions during the 1862 Peninsula Campaign. The event is set for the



James A. Fields House, 617 27th St, Newport News, Virginia. 2-5 pm. \$3 adults. 757-245-1991.

Special program, "Love Letters: A Civil War Romance," historical drama at Lee Hall in Newport News, Virginia. 2 pm. \$15 adults. 757-888-3371 or www.leehall.org.

February 21-22

Living history, "Freedom Won," talk with African-American soldiers who fought during the war at Endview Plantation in Newport News, Virginia. Free with admission. 757-887-1862 or www.endview.org.

February 28

Slide discussion, topic is the Shaw Memorial (54th Massachusetts Infantry in Washington, DC) at Fort Ward Museum in Alexandria. Commemorates the black infantry unit featured in the movie "Glory." 1 pm. \$5. Reservations suggested. 703-838-4848.



National Park Service

Arlington House was the home of Robert E. Lee and his family for thirty years and is uniquely associated with the Washington and Custis families. It is now preserved as a memorial to General Lee, who gained the respect of Americans in both the North and the South.

Arlington House
The Robert E. Lee Memorial
c/o George Washington Memorial Parkway
Turkey Run Park
McLean, VA 22101

Phone
703-235-1530

Web Site
<http://www.nps.gov/arho>

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Significant Historic Events in February (continued)

February 18, 1913

GW Custis Lee died at Ravensworth, near Annandale, Fairfax County, Virginia. He had retired as President of Washington and Lee College in 1897, and had spent his remaining years at Ravensworth making architectural drawings, doing gardening and enjoying a quiet, more secluded lifestyle.

AN IMPORTANT REMINDER

Please contact Delphine Gross no later than the 20th of each month with availability dates and times to be posted the following month (Please call by February 20th with March information). Even if you are a regularly scheduled VIP please contact Delphine to confirm your availability. Again, the contact number is (703) 235-1530 ext. 227. Please leave the dates and times you are available on the voice mail. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

WARM SPRINGS MUFFINS

Mary Custis, the eldest Lee daughter, visited Virginia's Warm Springs ("the Warm") before the war, during it, and afterward, in 1868, when Mildred contracted typhoid fever and prolonged the family's stay. During one of her visits, she took down this receipt for lovely, light muffins; it makes about 24, each 2 to 2½, inches across. The milk to be added in winter was needed to counteract the drying effect of cold air on flour; now modern borne heating makes it unnecessary. The "skillet with a top" suggests they could also be baked in a fireplace, but we were not equipped to try.

To a quart of flour put 2 eggs, a spoonful of butter, 2 ½ spoonfuls of yeast, and in winter some milk. Add a little salt. Put into greased muffin tins or baking cups. Allow to rise overnight. Bake them in an oven or a skillet with a top.

4 c. sifted flour, plus enough to make a soft dough
2 eggs
1 T. butter plus more for greasing baking tins and top of dough
2 ½ T. homemade yeast
½ t. or more salt

Sift salt with flour. Beat eggs well, add yeast and butter, melted and cooled. Mix into flour to make a soft dough. Raise overnight, covered, tops greased, in greased baking cups or muffin tins. Bake tins about 20 minutes in preheated 575-degree oven, longer in cold cast-iron or larger earthenware cups.

(From Anne Carter Zimmer's *The Robert E. Lee Family Cooking and Housekeeping Book*)



South Slave Quarters and Arlington House

Guided tours for February

Arlington House will be offering daily guided tours in recognition of Black History Month. The tours will focus on the African-American history of the site and will be presented every afternoon at 2:00 through the end of February. The tours will be organized as first come-first served though reservations may be made by contacting the site at the main number (703) 235-1530.

The guided tours for February will kick off a new initiative in which regular guided tours of the house will be offered to the general public. Those tours will encompass all aspects of the site's history. If any of you would like to lead tours please contact Delphine Gross so that you can be prepared and scheduled for that.

New Look for The Spectacle

This is now the fifth issue of The Spectacle utilizing the new format. This change was made for a number of reasons. The format follows the standards now established for NPS newsletters and uses the approved fonts (typeface). The fonts are smaller and we hope that this is not causing difficulty with reading the print. The smaller fonts and use of columns allows more material per page thereby reducing the number of pages per issue. This format also saves us mailing the newsletter in large envelopes, saving the cost of envelopes and reducing postage costs. You'll have noticed that the mailing address is printed on the last page of the newsletter.

If you have comments please feel free to share them with us.

February 2004

Arlington House VIP Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Jim Pearson 12:00-4:30	2 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	3 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	4 Jack McKay 9:30-12:30	5 C. Needham and Elaine Street 10:30-12:30	6 Joan Cashell 9:30-12:30	7
8 Robyn Vai 10:30-4:00 Jim Pearson 12:00-4:30 Elene Paul 10:00-3:00	9 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	10 Elene Paul 12:30-4:30 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	11 Jack McKay 9:30-12:30 Anne Cake 12:00-3:00	12 C. Needham and Elaine Street 10:30-12:30	13 Joan Cashell 9:30-12:30	14 Nona Wartella 12:00-4:00
15 Jim Pearson 12:00-4:30	16 Judy Volonoski 10:00-12:00 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	17 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	18 Jack McKay 9:30-12:30 Anne Cake 12:00-3:00	19 C. Needham 10:30-12:30	20 Joan Cashell 9:30-12:30	21
22 Jim Pearson 12:00-4:30 Training 6hrs X 2 Walter and Phyllis	23 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	24 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	25 Jack McKay 9:30-12:30 Anne Cake 12:00-3:00	26 C. Needham and Elaine Street 10:30-12:30	27 Joan Cashell 9:30-12:30	28 Vanna Lewis 10:00-4:30
29 Jim Pearson 12:00-4:30						

If you are available to volunteer, but are not on the calendar please call Delphine so you can be added to the schedule.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Arlington House
The Robert E. Lee Memorial
c/o George Washington Memorial Parkway
Turkey Run Park
McLean, VA 22101

<<Name>>
<<Address>>
<<CityStateZip>>

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

The Spectacle is a monthly newsletter for the volunteers of Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial.

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Comments? Write to:

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c/o George Washington Memorial Parkway
Turkey Run Park
McLean, VA 22101

Volunteers Needed

The roster of active volunteers is in dire need of additional names!!! If you know anyone interested in joining our ranks please refer them to Delphine Gross, Volunteer Coordinator 703 235-1530 ext. 227.

